

The times

The United Kingdom Standing Conference for Psychotherapy: Psychotherapy Register

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I have been asked to explain the structural changes that are taking place in UKSCP and to describe how these will lead to the formation of a register of psychotherapists early in 1993. I shall briefly survey the present balanced structure, describe the most recent changes and show how they will work in practice.

After the collapse of the professions joint working party, the Rugby psychotherapy conference was started which went on to become the UKSCP in January 1989. This was based on the concept of semi-autonomous Sections which would contain the different varieties of psychotherapy. Sections make their own rules provided that the rules and criteria make sense to the other Sections and fit within the agreed baseline of training criteria. These are: graduate level entry, MA equivalent content, supervised treatment of clients and training in the appropriate management of the trainee's own involvement in the therapy process. That will mean therapy or analysis for some kinds of psychotherapy and other forms of training for other kinds of therapy. The training must show that the arrangements are appropriate to the task of the particular kind of therapy.

For some time there has been a significant shift towards a more uniform standard of training by a subtle kind of upgrading that has gone on almost unnoticed. To stay in line within their own Section, member organisations have been raising their training requirements. Two examples: one organisation in the Analytic Psychotherapy Section used to recommend that its trainees have their own therapy, now they demand it. One of the Jungian trainings used to require twice weekly analysis, now it requires thrice. We have kept a steady pressure on the Sections to produce criteria that are distinctive and satisfactory.

The Council of UKSCP is made up of one delegate from each of the eight Sections and one each from the British Psychological Society, the Royal College of Psychiatrists, the Association of University Teachers of Psychiatry (AUTP), and The Tavistock Clinic. In addition there are five officers and four ordinary members who are elected at the AGM from the dele-

gates to Conference. All committees are created by Council and report to Council.

This structure is good for a profession, but not adequate to run a register. The main reason for this is that while Conference seeks to reach agreement, a register means that some are included and other excluded. To exclude according to agreed criteria there has to be enough authority. How to do this was an interesting problem. We agreed that we wanted something that was neither a committee of Council, which would be too weak, nor a separate organisation which would create a split. At our January 1992 AGM we agreed a structure to be called the Registration Board to distinguish it from a committee as it will not be answerable to Council. It will be composed of representatives from the special and the Institutional Members which I have named above: BPS, Royal College of Psychiatrists, AUTP, and Tavistock Clinic, plus representatives from the Sections under certain conditions such as that they are delegates from accredited training organisations and only Sections whose trainings are up to the minimum standard. The number of accredited training organisations in a Section determines how many representatives that Section can put on to the Board. There is also provision for the British Psycho-Analytical society to have a seat on the Board.

The functions of the new Registration board when it is formed in January 1993 will be to create and maintain a Register of Psychotherapists. It will also check that the Sections are validating trainings properly and that scrutiny of all member organisations in UKSCP is going on as it should. The new Training Standards Committee will advise on all matters of training. These include credit transfer, APEL, CNA rules, etc. It will seek to raise the standard of the minimum requirement that any training will have to meet, but not decide specific trainings in any Section. Each Section and each training body will continue to keep their own standards, as at present. They will attract candidates by their excellence, and most of the trainings in UKSCP will continue to be well above the floor level. The question of own therapy for the psychotherapy trainee concerns us and seems

to perplex many. We began with a statement that required analysis and self examination before, during and after training which has been superseded by a new wording requiring trainings to ensure that the trainee psychotherapist learns how to manage his or her own involvement in the therapeutic process. The new wording is close to that of the JCHPT of the Royal College of Psychiatrists. Each Section will formulate its own approach to this requirement and show how that is effective. For analysis and analytical psychotherapy this will remain the personal analysis.

How are we going to create the Register? As we do not want to register everybody, we have to start from some criteria. What we are doing is creating a Preliminary List. We have asked all the Sections to let us know how they propose to judge which of their member organisations either train to at least our minimum standards, or recruit at that level. At the last AGM we expelled an organisation which had been recruiting below the level of its Section. From those enquiries we will list the organisations which conform and list their practising members. We will agree on the labels, that is the names by which the different psychotherapies wish their practitioners to be known.

We expect that it will need quite a lot of thought to decide on the best labels to use, as we want to be both accurate and neutral. It is not our intention to give offence nor to imply that there is any better or worse kind of psychotherapy, only that there are different kinds that can be distinguished by their names. Some labels may change when the first Register is made and some may well change subsequently. It only needs agreement that another name would be better and not divisive.

The preliminary list will be handed over to the Registration Board as the basis of the Register. As quickly as is practicable, we shall move to adding to the register only the names of those who have successfully completed an accredited training. But we must be fair to those who have started on a training before the register was begun. The Registration Board will carry out some spot checks to see that rules are being observed.

Organisations get into UKSCP in the first place by applying to the Council who check that they are a bona fide organisation according to our criteria. Since 1989 we have turned away about 40 organisations at this stage. Next they must apply to the Section of their choice who will assess whether they are a psychotherapy and if so, whether they fit the criteria of that Section. If they do, the Section recommends them to the Council as suitable, and the Council recommends them to the next AGM, provided that the Council are satisfied that the Section has done its job properly. The new organisation has to achieve a two thirds vote at the AGM to become a member. Not all have managed this final hurdle. Once inside the conference, every organisation is subject to a five yearly sunset rule when it is reassessed.

At our last general meeting training standards were discussed at length and arrived at by amending the proposals into the form that they now have. There are still many problems to be tackled. I hope that we will continue to discuss and amend as we have managed to for a number of years. The aim is to create a strong profession that will be able to give serious attention to the provision of good psychotherapy throughout the UK. That will mean working extensively in the NHS as well as in private practice.

Video competition

The Public Education Committee wants a short videotape (running *no more than 5 minutes*) to be shown at Careers Fairs, to complement the College's Careers Pack. The idea is to attract still more of the highest and best medical students to consider a career in psychiatry.

Thanks to Boots Pharmaceuticals, a prize of £5000 is offered for the best video submitted by an individual or Department of Psychiatry before 31 May 1993.

So Lights, Action, Camera – !